Report on erosion of soil

†1183. SHRI RAM JETHMALANI:
SHRI RAJ MOHINDER SINGH MAJITHA:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government has been warned by presenting a report on behalf of research institutes that productivity of agricultural land in the country is reducing due to erosion of soil;

(b) if so, the facts in this regard;

(c) the assessment with regard to annual average rate of erosion of soil of agriculture land in every State of the country; and

(d) the steps Government has taken to check the erosion of soil in year 2006 and 2007?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. As per Vision - 2025 document of Central Soil and Water Conservation Research and Training Institute, Dehradun, nearly 44% of the total area in the country has erosion rates more than the permissible limit of 10 tonnes/ha/year. Accordingly, over 5.3 billion tonnes of soil and around 8.4 million tonnes of plant nutrients are lost every year through water erosion. Rough estimates show agricultural loss from soil erosion to the tune of Rs. 5200—8400 crores per annum.

(c) The average annual soil erosion rates (t/ha/year) computed for twelve States so far are as follows:—

Andhra Pradesh (13.09), Assam (22.64), Bihar (7.26), Chhattisgarh (19.43), Gujarat (8.16), Karnataka (12.22), M.P. (18.60), Maharashtra (12.68), Orissa (11.29), Rajasthan (15.90), Tripura (15.13) and W. Bengal (8.34).

(d) The Government is implementing location specific erosion control measures development by Central Soil and Water Conservation Research and Training Institute, Dehradun through different integrated watershed management programmes run by various agencies. The institute also organized regular training courses for field functionaries and farmers in this regard.

Increasing rice consumption

1184. SHRI MOTIUR RAHMAN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the country's rice consumption is increasing 1 to 1.5 million tonnes every year and the Planning Commission estimates that by 2020, the demand for rice would exceed 120 million tonnes;

(b) whether the production of rice has declined from 93.34 million tonnes in 2001-02 to 92.76 million tonnes last year;

(c) whether rapid conversion of crop land to non-farm use, inadequate irrigation facilities and lack of new and healthy seeds have led to a slowdown of rice production; and

(d) if so, how Government proposes to meet the demand of rice and to check price rise of rice?

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.